

far-reaching and comprehensive trade agreement ever negotiated with a non-market economy country. It grants the United States vastly improved access to Vietnam's potentially enormous consumer class, and improves market access for industrial and agricultural goods, services, intellectual property rights, and investment, while requiring greater transparency.

The U.S.-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement will help Vietnam's reformers lock in the economic transformation that slower growth after the Asian financial crisis threatens to unravel. Continued engagement with the Vietnamese government also advances key U.S. foreign policy objectives, including the fullest possible accounting of Prisoners of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA), freedom of emigration, increased U.S. business opportunities in Vietnam, and promoting Asian regional stability.

Former Vietnamese Ambassador to the United States, Le Van Bang recently noted the positive influence that continued engagement has had on the Vietnamese people. He said that since we first reestablished diplomatic ties, the Vietnamese people have changed their attitudes toward Americans from "the bitterness of war to a love of America." In such a fresh and positive atmosphere, our values in other key areas surely stand a much better hearing and more open consideration if we continue down this road. Approval of the U.S.-Vietnam BTA demonstrates we too are healing from one of the most divisive wars in our nation's history and that we seek to begin a new and truly productive era in U.S.-Vietnamese relations.

Congressional approval of the U.S.-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement and the expansion of business contacts between our two nations provides the strongest foundation for encouraging even further progress and reform in Vietnam. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to vote yes for H.J. Res. 51.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this measure to expand our trade relations with Vietnam.

This resolution, which ratifies the U.S.-Vietnam bilateral trade agreement and extends normal trade relations to Vietnam, enjoys broad bipartisan support. The agreement represents a milestone toward building a stronger commercial relationship with Vietnam and promoting U.S. security and diplomatic interests in the region.

We have seen tremendous progress in our diplomatic and economic relations with the Vietnamese Government. The country is experiencing a new era, driven by a population where 65 percent of its citizens were born after the war. Vietnam today welcomes U.S. trade and economic investment.

Through a policy of engagement and U.S. business investment, Vietnam has improved its policies on immigration, cooperated on U.S. refugee programs, and worked with the United States on achieving the fullest possible accounting of POW/MIAs from the Vietnam War.

Despite problems of corruption and government repression, there is reason to believe that our presence in Vietnam can improve the situation and encourage its government to become more open, respect human rights and follow the rule of law. Former U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, Pete Peterson, our esteemed former colleague and former POW, has been one of our nation's strongest advocates for expanding trade with Vietnam.

However, this resolution is not a blank check to Vietnam. Before the United States grants NTR status to Vietnam, the Vietnamese Government is required to sharply lower most tariffs; phase out all non-tariff measures; and adhere to WTO standards in applying customs, import licensing and other measures.

This measure also takes an important step in requiring Vietnam to allow U.S. firms over a period of time to enter its services market in a full range of areas, including financial, telecom, engineering, computing, education, health and other services. Two other critical areas of this agreement require Vietnam to protect U.S. investments from expropriation and adopt a fully transparent trade and investment regime.

Mr. Speaker, disapproval of this resolution will only discourage U.S. businesses from operating in Vietnam, arm Soviet-style hardliners with the pretext to clamp down on what economic and social freedoms the Vietnamese people now experience, and eliminate what opportunity we have to influence Vietnam in the future.

Approval of this bilateral agreement will advance U.S. economic interests and, more importantly to our regional interests in Asia, further integrate Vietnam into the global economy. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in favor of H.J. Res. 51. I am pleased to have the opportunity to vote in favor of free trade while respecting my commitment to Human Rights.

Mr. Speaker, last year the U.S. signed a sweeping bilateral trade agreement with Vietnam.

The State Department year 2000 review of Vietnam human rights noted that Vietnam has made improvements in its human rights record. Despite these improvements, the State Department still rated Vietnam as "poor" overall on human rights, highlighting continued government repression of basic political freedoms. The State Department also noted that the Vietnam Government is intolerant of dissenting viewpoints, and selectively represses the religious rights of its citizens.

Because of these factors, I voted in favor of H.J. Res. 55, legislation disapproving Waiver Authority with respect to Vietnam. Mr. Speaker, my vote was a protest vote, for I believe we cannot continue to hope that trade alone will guarantee the basic human rights of our trading partners.

Today, this House also considers H.R. 2368, the "Vietnam Human Rights Act," which establishes a commission to monitor human rights in Vietnam. I regard this as a step in a new direction, and one that I applaud. By discussing trade with Vietnam in the same context as its human rights situation, we are finally moving in a more comprehensive direction that respects our global obligations.

As the leader of the free world, we have an obligation to promote core values when engaging the rest of the world. Thus, I have fewer reservations about moving forward with Vietnam.

As we move into this new millennium, our actions here today signal a commitment to expanding the marketplace in a manner that benefits both the United States and Vietnam. The extension of Normal Trade Relations will grant market access to American industrial and agricultural products previously denied

from competition. U.S. firms are also granted access to the Vietnam services market. We will be allowed to compete in telecommunications, financial services, engineering, accounting, and a variety of industries that will help develop an infrastructure in Vietnam to support our new commitment to engage Vietnam on all levels of concern.

The approval of this legislation will ensure that U.S. firms committed to trade with Vietnam receive the protection of investments necessary to commit resources in a foreign country. By requiring a fully transparent trade regime with the promulgation of laws and regulations through a public process, this legislation helps Vietnam develop policies that will help this nation fully engage the world.

This legislation cannot be evaluated, however, without the approval of H.R. 2368. Advancing the agenda of global trade in countries that do not respect their citizens is tantamount to modern day feudalism, and should not be supported by this House.

Establishing a trade regime with Vietnam that will ease this nation's transition into the WTO means nothing unless prisoners like Catholic Priest Nguyen Van Ly, Mr. Le Quang Liem of the Inter-Religious Council, and Buddhist leaders the Venerable Thieh Huyen Quang and the Venerable Thieh Quang Do are ensured their right to freely exercise their respective religions.

Mr. Speaker, today this House goes a long way toward reconciling the concerns of all parties interested in global trade and its consequences. Passage of H.J. Res. 51 ensures that American products will be given fair access to the Vietnamese marketplace. By combining the extension of this trade with the recognition of Human Rights here on the House Floor, we set a positive precedent for future trade legislation. I therefore support H.J. Res. 51.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). All time for debate has expired. Pursuant to the order of the House of Wednesday, September 5, 2001, the joint resolution is considered read for amendment, and the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the joint resolution.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.J. Res. 51, the joint resolution just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

#### REREFERRAL OF H.R. 1448 TO COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES AND COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Ways and Means be discharged from consideration of the bill,